

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KAMPAL 02260 121102Z

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ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY KAMPALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2845

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KAMPALA 2260

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OCON US UG

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL YMCA CONVENTION IN KAMPALA

REF: STATE 135958

1. IT IS PERHAPS A BIT LATE IN THE GAME FOR US TO BE TRYING TO HEAD OFF PARTICIPATION IN SUBJECT CONFERENCE BY US CITIZENS, BUT THIS EMBASSY IS OF OPINION THAT SUCH PARTICIPATION SHOULD BE DISCOURAGED, AND PREVENTED IF POSSIBLE. FRANKLY, WE HAD BEEN HOPING THAT YMCA OF US WOULD DECIDE OF ITS OWN ACCORD TO DISCOURAGE PARTICIPATION OF ITS MEMBERS, WITHOUT ANY USG INVOLVEMENT, AND IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE DID NOT RECOMMEND EARLIER THAT USG GIVE YMCA OF US ADVICE AGAINST PARTICIPATION THAT HAS NOW BEEN GIVEN (REFTEL). IT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BECOME KNOWN TO GENERAL AMIN THAT WE HAVE COUNSELED AGAINST US PARTICIPATION, ESPECIALLY IF USG ADVICE IS HEEDDED, AND HE WILL DEEM IT A MOST UNFRIENDLY ACT, AS HE HAS SURELY BEEN COUNTING ON THIS LARGE CONFERENCE TO BROADCAST TO WORLD THAT EVERYTHING IS JUST DANDY IN UGANDA.

2. BELIEVE IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL IF WE PHRASED OUR ADVICE TO YMCA OF US IN TERMS THAT PRESIDENT OF UGANDA HAS BANNED TOURISM TO UGANDA AND IT IS THEREFORE UNWISE FOR FOREIGNERS, ESPECIALLY AMERICANS, TO TRAVEL TO THIS COUNTRY. IN OTHER WORDS, OUR ADVICE SHOULD BE THAT AMERICANS SHOULD COMPLY WITH THE GENERAL'S
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PAGE 02 KAMPAL 02260 121102Z

BAN ON TOURISM. AMIN HAS PERSONALLY APPROVED OF THE HOLDING OF

THIS CONFERENCE IN KAMPALA, SO IN HIS VIEW THERE EXISTS NO INCONSISTENCY WITH HIS BAN ON TOURISM, BUT THAT IS NO REASON WHY WE SHOULD NOT USE HIS OWN DECLARATIONS TO CARRY OUT OUR PURPOSES.

3. CHARLES LIBURD, ENGINEER WHO IS CITIZEN OF GUYANA AND THE HONORARY COUNSUL OF GUYANA, HAS BEEN PROMOTING THIS CONFERENCE WITH ALL HIS ENERGY. ONE OF HIS AIMS IN LIFE IS TO BECOME BUDDIES WITH GENERAL AMIN, FOR WHAT PURPOSE IT IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR, BUT HE IS ALSO PROBABLY AN INTELLIGENCE AGENT (OF BRITISH, I PRESUME). LIBURD WENT TO GENEVA (I BELIEVE) EARLIER THIS YEAR TO ATTEND A PLANNING SESSION FOR THIS YMCA CONFERENCE AND TOLD PLANNING GROUP IT WAS A GREAT IDEA TO HOLD THE CONFERENCE IN KAMPALA, AND GOU AND GENERAL AMIN PERSONALLY WELCOMED IT AND WOULD BE VERY HOSPITABLE. LIBURD WAS PLEASED TO REPORT TO AMIN ON HIS RETURN TO KAMPALA THAT EVERYTHING WAS IN ORDER AND CONFERENCE WOULD BE HELD HERE. APPARENTLY THE PLANNING GROUP HAD SOME DOUBTS ABOUT WISDOM OF HOLDING CONFERENCE HERE. I HAVE TOLD LIBURD FRANKLY THAT IN MY PERSONAL OPINION IT IS A MISTAKE, BUT HE THINKS I'M PREJUDICED AGAINST GENERAL AMIN.

4. WE ARE SENDING NOTE TO FOREIGN MINISTRY TO INFORM THEM OF ARRIVAL OF THIS GROUP OF AMERICANS IN TERMS SET FORTH NEXT PARA BELOW. IF AMERICAN GROUP DOES NOT ATTEND, IT MAY APPEAR TO GOU THAT THEIR FAILURE TO SHOW UP WAS NONE OF OUR DOING, IN VIEW OF OUR NOTE OF NOTIFICATION, BUT IF GOU SHOULD LEARN (AS IT PROBABLY WILL) THAT AMERICANS DID NOT COME HERE BECAUSE USG ADVISED THEM NOT TO, WE WILL LOOK A BIT RIDICULOUS OR DISHONEST, BUT SO WHAT?

5. "...AND HAS THE HONOR TO NOTIFY THE MINISTRY OF THE PLANNED ARRIVAL IN KAMPALA OF A LARGE GROUP OF AMERICANS, BELIEVED TO NUMBER ABOUT 125, WHO PLAN TO ATTEND THE INTERNATIONAL YMCA CONFERENCE TO BE HELD HERE FROM JULY 17 TO 26. THE EMBASSY IS PROVIDING THIS NOTIFICATION IN VIEW OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST TO THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, AT THEIR MEETING ON JULY 10, THAT THE EMBASSY NOTIFY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WHENEVER IT BECOMES AWARE THAT ANY LARGE GROUP OF AMERICAN CITIZENS IS COMING TO UGANDA."

6. IT IS A WONDER THAT THESE AMERICAN YMCA PEOPLE WOULD WANT TO COME TO UGANDA AT THIS TIME. HAVEN'T THEY BEEN READING THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KAMPAL 02260 121102Z

PAPERS? DO THEY WISH TO RUN THE RISK OF SPENDING THE NIGHT IN THE TRANSIT LOUNGE AT ENTEBBE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBILITY THAT THEY ARE MERCENARIES ON THEIR WAY TO RWANDA TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT THERE?

KEELEY

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